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Weekly Situation Report on International Terrorism

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WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

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BACKGROUND ARTICLE

The JCR: Is Latin American Terrorism Going Transcontinental?

The Revolutionary Coordinating Junta (JCR) was formed in November 1972 by representatives of the Argentine People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), the Chilean Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), and the Uruguayan Tupamaros. The organization was finally formalized on 13 February 1974, when the above three components plus the Bolivian National Liberation Army (ELN) issued a joint communique proclaiming that the JCR would form a central operational command over all the Latin American liberation movements, composed of representatives of the various member organizations. This command would coordinate guerrilla actions, logistics and financing at a continental level. On 20 February the JCR declared war on the government of Juan Peron and announced that it would "struggle against the allies of imperialism and establish a nationalist third position rejecting United States and Soviet imperialism." 3.3(b)(1)

The JCR remained an enigma until the spring of 1975 when Argentine authorities began uncovering evidence of its activities. It began making public statements in Europe, and [redacted] documents revealed that JCR activities had spread far beyond the cone of South America and that the organization maintained contact with a large number of Latin American terrorist groups and had established offices in Europe. [redacted] other information has come to light through various sources which indicates that the scope of JCR activities was much greater than previously suspected. 3.3(b)(1)

The single dominating force in the JCR is the ERP. Using the millions of dollars obtained from four years of terrorist activity, the ERP has made itself the driving force behind the JCR, and all other member organizations have taken subordinate positions.

The JCR has been moving to expand its membership and contacts among Latin American terrorist groups. On 17 March 1975 it announced that the Paraguayan National Liberation Front (FREPALINA) had been admitted to the JCR. The JCR is known to have contact with the Venezuelan Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN); the National Liberation Army (ELN) and the pro-Soviet Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC); and

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the Peruvian Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) and Revolutionary Vanguard (VR); as well as groups in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, El Salvador and Ecuador. These contacts range anywhere from the exchange of letters to attendance at JCR-sponsored conferences, visits by JCR delegations, and training at JCR camps. The details of most of these contacts are still cloudy, and the extent to which each group is aligned with the JCR has not yet been fully determined.

JCR activities in Europe also have been much more extensive than previously believed. The JCR has or has had offices in Paris, Lisbon and Geneva, plus contacts in Italy and Sweden. It is believed that the JCR may be in contact with certain European extremist organizations, but the details of these contacts are unknown. It now appears that the JCR may be concentrating its European forces in Lisbon.

As far as is known, the JCR itself has never claimed responsibility for a terrorist act. Rather, it has concentrated its activities in four main areas--funding, propaganda, operational support and training.

3.3(b)(1)

a. Funding: Money is the glue that holds the JCR together and makes it a viable force.

3.3(b)(1)

70 per cent of all money collected by member organizations goes to the JCR. It is believed that the ERP obtained over US $30 million in ransom and extortion money in recent years. Just how much of this money the JCR has and funnels back into member and other organizations is not known.

3.3(b)(1)

the ERP sent the Chilean MIR US $300,000 in September 1974, and followed this payment with monthly

3.3(b)(1)

contributions of US $60,000. It is believed these contributions were kept up at least until the spring of 1975.

the Chilean MIR had received between US $1.5 million and US $2.5 million and that US $4 million was earmarked for the purchase of arms in the United States.

b. Propaganda: Ever since its founding the JCR has been attempting to set up a propaganda mechanism. Its Paris office was responsible for the creation of a JCR press agency, the Agencia de Prensa America Latina (APAL), in December 1974. APAL published a magazine, Boletin APAL, some 20 editions of which were distributed

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in France, Italy and Argentina. There have also been proposals to distribute Boletin APAL in other European countries, the U.S., Mexico and Venezuela. The JCR has also made a propaganda movie to be used in fund-raising activities and has joined with the Group of Solidarity with the People in Argentina, which is active in the Bertrand Russell Tribunal. The JCR contact with representatives of several international organizations dealing with human rights and political refugees, to inspire them to conduct an investigation of human rights in Argentina, financed the travel to Argentina of two members of the International Commission of Jurists.

3.3(b)(1)

3.3(b)(1)

c. Operational Support: The JCR has provided extensive operational support to member groups. The JCR has assisted the MIR in establishing bases along the Chilean border

3.3(b)(1)

The JCR also furnishes weapons and ammunition to member groups. Argentine police uncovered a cache of weapons which was supplying Tupamaros infiltrating back into Uruguay. The cache contained at least 250 submachine guns, ten 357-magnum revolvers, and an unknown quantity of handgrenades and shotguns.

3.3(b)(1)

The JCR also provides travel documentation to member groups.

d. Training: The JCR has provided both political and guerrilla training to individuals belonging to both member groups and nonmember groups. Training has consisted of political indoctrination as well as guerrilla techniques. One training camp established by the JCR was located on a tobacco plantation

3.3(b)(1)

Individuals being trained at the camp included members of all of the groups belonging to the JCR

The extent of Cuba's involvement in the JCR is not known. There have been reports that the JCR was organized at the behest of the Cubans. Many of the individuals belonging to the JCR were trained in Cuba, and JCR representatives travel

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regularly to and from Cuba. On the other hand, JCR representatives meeting in March 1975 in Portugal all subscribed to the Pact of Lisbon, part of which stated that Cuba should no longer serve as the only model or source of support for revolutionary activity in Latin America and that the direct responsibility for the development and progress of the Latin American revolutionary movement lies with each individual revolutionary organization. Whether this statement is so much propaganda window dressing to hide Cuban involvement in the JCR, or whether the JCR has shut out the Cubans is not known.

The extent of the threat posed by the JCR is difficult to gauge. Although more is known about the JCR now than in the past, many areas of JCR activity are still nebulous. A concerted effort is being made to find out more about this organization. From what is known so far, however, it is safe to conclude that the JCR could become one of the most active and dangerous forces in international terrorism. It is evident now that the JCR is fairly well organized and its members are well trained. Most importantly, the JCR has money and extensive contacts.

The JCR has weaknesses too. It has not yet enjoyed any conspicuous successes outside Argentina despite vast amounts of money and technical assistance. Secondly, because it is so dominated by the ERP, the JCR will, in all probability, fold up if the ERP goes under. [redacted] 3.3(b)(1)

There are three possible routes that the JCR could take during the next few years. First of all, it could continue expanding its contacts and giving aid and comfort to terrorist groups all over Latin America. This would tend to stabilize rather unstable groups and make them more effective. Secondly, it could contract its forces and concentrate on its primary enemies--governments in the cone of South America--thus cutting the risk of spreading itself too thin. Finally, it could take the Palestinian road, and escalate its activities into a worldwide campaign of terror against its enemies. As it is presently organized, the JCR is capable of all three options or combinations of the three. Although the first two options seem the most likely, it is conceivable that circumstances could drive the JCR leaders to feel that the third is the only option they could take. As it is currently constituted, the JCR could carry out a very effective international terrorist campaign, particularly if it obtained the support of other terrorist groups outside Latin America. [redacted] 3.5(c)

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